

Remarks to Reporters at a CVS Pharmacy

October 20, 2006

Medicare Reform

The President. Secretary Leavitt and I are pleased to be here at this counter where seniors come to buy prescription drugs. And one of the interesting things that happens at this counter is that these decent folks are constantly reminding seniors that there is a cost-saving benefit, Plan D in Medicare, available for them. It's a new plan; it just started last year. The Health and Human Services helped implement the plan, and millions of seniors are benefiting. Our seniors are saving money. They're getting better coverage. It's a plan that I'm real proud of.

We will continue to work to make it as good as it possibly can be. I really do want to thank these kind-hearted souls who say to a senior that you no longer—poor seniors, particularly—you no longer have to choose between food and medicine, because there's a new way forward. Our compassionate approach to health care is working for America's seniors. And I want to thank you—you want to say anything about the enrollment process?

Secretary of Health and Human Services Michael O. Leavitt. On November 15th, people can go through an open enrollment period. Eighty percent of seniors who are on this plan are satisfied with their plan, and if they're satisfied, they don't need to do anything. But over 80 percent will be able to find a plan that's cheaper, if they want to, or that may, in fact, fit their particular situation.

We'll have people available at 1-800-MEDICARE. There will be people at pharmacies and at senior centers—and others that can help them around the country. This has been a big success, and we're going to get better at it. We're getting better at it every year. It'll be better this year than it was last, and it will be better the year after that, just like Medicare was in 1965. This is a very important American success story that we'll now build upon.

The President. Thank you all very much. Appreciate it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:04 a.m.

Remarks at a National Republican Senatorial Committee Reception

October 20, 2006

Thanks for coming. Please be seated. I appreciate you being here. On the way down, Mr. McConnell said, "Keep it short; they haven't had their food yet." [Laughter]

But I want to thank you all for coming. As you well know, we're heading down the stretch here in this important political season. I want to thank you for helping our Senate candidates. It means a lot. I don't know about you, but I am absolutely confident that Mitch McConnell will be the leader of the United States Senate in 2007.

I appreciate Mitch's leadership, and I appreciate the leadership of Elizabeth Dole as well. These are two of the finest United States Senators we have.

Laura sends her best. She is a patient woman. [Laughter] She is doing just fine. I'm real proud of her. She is a fabulous First Lady.

Oh, there's going to be a lot of noise here at the end of the campaign. There always is. And sometimes it's all meant to obscure the main issues. Sometimes folks don't really want to talk about the core issues that will affect the future of this country. I think there are two big issues that we need to stay focused on and I know our candidates are talking about, and they're issues in which there are big differences of opinion. And the first issue is taxes.

There is a difference of opinion between—what we ought to be doing with your money, see. There are people in the Democrat Party who think they can spend your money far better than you can. And we believe that you're plenty capable of spending your own money. As a matter of fact, we believe that when you have more of your own money in your pocket to save, invest, or spend, all of us benefit; that the economy grows; that hope expands; that the entrepreneurial spirit is invigorated.

And so in times of economic difficulty, I worked with Members of the United States Senate and the United States House to pass